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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review theme: the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls

Chair's summary

1. At its 4th meeting, on 15 March 2016, the Commission on the Status of Women evaluated progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions on the priority theme from its fifty-seventh session, "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls" (see E/2013/27-E/CN.6/2013/11), through an interactive dialogue. The meetings were chaired by Andreas Glossner, Fatma al Zahraa Hassan and Šejla Đurbuzović, Vice-Chairs of the Commission. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, concluded the consideration of the review theme with her reflections on the key messages and lessons learned from three years of implementation.

2. As part of the review, 10 Member States from different regions presented, on a voluntary basis, lessons learned, challenges and best practices and identified means for accelerated implementation through national and regional efforts. The presentations, by Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Estonia, Japan, Romania, Sweden, Turkey and Tunisia, are available from www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016/official-meetings#presentation1. A further 11 Member States, namely, Argentina, Eritrea, Finland, Georgia, India, Italy, Mexico, Morocco, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, presented in brief their efforts towards the implementation of the agreed conclusions. The presentations gave rise to interactive discussion on how the agreed

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conclusions had been instrumental for accelerated action on preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls.

3. As part of the review theme, an interactive expert panel convened on 17 March 2016 to reflect on ways to support and achieve accelerated implementation, including through addressing data gaps and challenges in the enhanced collection, reporting, use and analysis of data with regard to the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. The panellists were: the Chief, Social and Housing Statistics Section, Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Irene Casique Rodríguez (Mexico), Researcher, Regional Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies of the National Autonomous University; and Ainur Dossanova (Kazakhstan), Chief Expert, Division of Social and Demographic Statistics, Committee for Statistics, Ministry of National Economy.

4. All speakers in the interactive dialogue on the review theme affirmed that violence against women and girls occurred in all countries and cultures and noted that such violence was rooted in structural gender inequality and discrimination. Participants discussed the various forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls, as well as new and emerging forms of violence, including those related to developments in technology. They highlighted the impact and consequences of such violence on the lives of individuals, families, communities and societies. Several speakers asserted that the agreed conclusions from the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women provided a comprehensive road map for countries in preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls.

5. There was broad agreement that progress had been made in implementing the agreed conclusions in all key areas, including through the adoption, strengthening and implementation of relevant laws and policies, the implementation of prevention strategies, the provision of a range of services for the protection, care and recovery of victims/survivors, and improvements in data collection and analysis. The importance of exchanging experiences and good practices with a view to advancing implementation within and across countries was emphasized.

6. Many speakers noted that, in order to be effective, interventions aimed at ending violence against women and girls had to be multisectoral and well-coordinated to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities. Speakers consistently stressed the role and importance of civil society organizations in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls. Concerns were raised about the lack of adequate funding for efforts to address violence against women and girls, and calls were made for stronger political will to secure such funding.

7. Many speakers noted the importance of international and regional human rights legal and policy documents to support their efforts towards the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. Several participants drew attention to the ratification of international and regional instruments by their countries and how it had provided the impetus for the development and strengthening of national legal and policy frameworks.

8. Participants highlighted the importance of comprehensive legislation on violence against women and girls. Some noted that such legislation had recently been enacted or strengthened in their countries, while others referred to ongoing efforts to enact such legislation. In addition to legislation, participants gave

examples of national policies and action plans on ending violence against women and girls, including for specific forms of violence and harmful practices, such as gender-related killings (femicide/feminicide) and female genital mutilation/cutting. Speakers also discussed the remaining challenges and gaps in relation to the implementation of laws and policies, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of their impact.

9. Speakers pointed out the urgency of the prevention of violence against women and girls and agreed that such efforts had to go beyond mere awareness-raising. Many participants discussed efforts to change attitudes, beliefs and behaviours by reaching out to boys and girls and young women and men through education curricula, arts programmes and information and communications technology. Many participants referred to their efforts in addressing harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, and provided examples of promising initiatives, such as national awareness-raising campaigns, which had led to positive changes in public attitudes to those harmful practices.

10. Initiatives for the economic empowerment of women, including through microcredit programmes, as well as measures to increase women's leadership in politics and the public sector, were in place in many countries to support prevention efforts. Despite those efforts and gains, concerns were voiced about the reassertion of patriarchal norms and traditional masculinities as a barrier to preventing and ending violence against women and girls.

11. Many speakers underlined the need to ensure the availability and accessibility of services. While one-stop centres were increasingly being used, the limitations of such options outside urban areas were also raised. Speakers emphasized the urgent need for targeted measures to address the needs of specific groups of women and girls, including those who faced multiple forms of discrimination and who were more vulnerable to violence.

12. Greater efforts were needed to provide information on the availability of services and on the rights of victims/survivors to access services. Speakers also emphasized the challenge of accessibility of services for women living in rural and remote regions but provided examples of good practices, such as the provision of multisectoral services through mobile units.

13. Participants stressed the importance of supporting ongoing training on gender equality and violence against women and girls and of capacity-building for the police, the judiciary, local governments, social service providers and the media. Many speakers stressed the need to ensure that perpetrators were held accountable, through justice mechanisms and other initiatives such as perpetrator programmes.

14. Several examples were provided of efforts to support children who had been directly exposed to and/or had witnessed violence. Participants stressed the importance of intervening at the earliest opportunity with such children in order to avoid further revictimization or future perpetration of violence. Some speakers discussed ongoing work with the police to strengthen their response to child victims.

15. Participants referred to the urgent need to develop national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact of laws, policies and programmes that address violence against women and girls.

16. The challenges and lessons learned in the collection, production and use of statistics on violence against women, as well as the opportunities and challenges presented by the monitoring requirements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, were discussed during the interactive expert panel on addressing data gaps and methodology issues. Speakers highlighted the increased availability of data and addressed methodological standards for the production of statistics on specific forms of violence against women. Among the main challenges were the comparability of data within and across countries; the lack of standards for the collection of data on specific forms of violence; the high cost of conducting surveys; and ethical and safety concerns relating to the collection of data on the subject. Participants also mentioned the limitations of existing surveys and the lack of available data for specific subgroups of women, including older women and young girls, women from ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, indigenous women and members of the lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.

17. Speakers stressed the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, in the planning processes for the collection and use of data, as well as the added value of using qualitative methods to better understand the causes, risk factors and consequences of violence against women and girls. Participants gave examples of their efforts to develop national information systems on violence against women to gather data from different sources and noted the need for harmonization between different data sources.

18. Speakers were optimistic about the opportunities presented by the monitoring requirements for the Sustainable Development Goals to improve the collection of data on all forms of violence and on groups of women who were at higher risk of violence and for whom data were currently lacking. They also highlighted opportunities for building the capacities of national statistics offices and other relevant stakeholders to produce statistics on violence against women.